



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012**
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>

Monday, June 4, 2012

10:00 AM

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (12-2637)

Attachments: [AUDIO](#)

Present: Chair Patricia Curry, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman,
Commissioner Carol O. Biondi, Commissioner Helen A.
Kleinberg, Commissioner Dr. La-Doris McClaney,
Commissioner Daphne Ng, Commissioner Steven M. Olivas
Esq., Commissioner Sandra Rudnick, Commissioner Adelina
Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell and
Commissioner Dr. Harriette F. Williams

Excused: Vice Chair Genevra Berger, Vice Chair Dr. Sunny Kang and
Commissioner Ann E. Franzen

Call to order. (12-2508)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:07 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Introductions of June 4, 2012 Meeting attendees. (12-2499)

Self-introductions were made.

2. Approval of the June 4, 2012 Meeting Agenda. (12-2500)

**On motion of Commissioner Dr. La-Doris McClaney, seconded by
Commissioner Adelina Sorkin, unanimously carried, (Commissioners
Berger, Kang and Franzen being absent), this item was approved.**

II. REPORT

3. Chair's report by Patricia Curry, Chair for June 4, 2012. (12-2502)

Chair Curry thanked everyone in attendance and informed the members that there will be a follow-up discussion on relative care at the next regular meeting of the Commission.

III. DISCUSSION

4. Roundtable Discussion by the Commission, County Departments, and Child Welfare Advocates/Stakeholders on how to better address the support and services provided to Relative Caregivers. (12-1564)

Chair Curry opened up a roundtable discussion.

- Michael Gray, Division Chief, Kinship Support Division
Department of Children and Family Services

--Update on the Relative Care Resource Centers

Mr. Grey provided the Commission an informational packet and reported the following:

There are currently two Kinship Support Centers in operation; the main objectives of the centers are to maximize the utility of relative caregivers and to help external stakeholders understand how to work with relative caregivers.

The mission of the Kinship Support Division is to promote, increase and sustain permanency for all youth in relative care. This can be accomplished by providing education, supportive services, advocacy, mentoring and aftercare assistance that is easily accessible and meets the need of the child, family and community.

There are currently 17,165 children in some form of relative care in Los Angeles County; the following is a breakdown of the numbers of children in relative care:

- 7,925 children are in relative placement within DCFS
- 882 children are adopted by relatives
- 2,117 children are in relative guardianship

- **6,241 children have exited the DCFS system through Kinship-Guardian Assistance Payment Program (Kin-GAP)**

In 2011, the Kinship Support Division in collaboration with Commissioner Williams, Chair of the Relative Care Committee, developed a set of outcomes for children in relative care that were aligned with the objectives of the Community, Caregivers, Youth and DCFS. The Kinship Support Division will be working with other agencies to identify activities that will lead to accomplishing the outcomes. In 2012, the Kinship Support Services Division reported an 83% satisfaction rate on services provided by this group. Some of Kinship's 2012 achievements are:

- **Adoption of the DCFS Kinship outcomes.**
 - **Planning and implementing the conversion of Assembly Bill 12 (AB 12) Program.**
 - **Being in the process of relocating the Kinship Support Centers.**
 - **Being in the final stages of acquiring a Federal Navigation Grant through the Children's Bureau.**
- Bryan Mershon, Ph.D., Deputy Director, Children's Systems of Care
Department of Mental Health

--Update on Respite Care and Systems Navigators

Mr. Mershon reported the following:

The co-location of the Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Navigator will be at the Kinship Resource Center North on Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; navigator can be reached by telephone at (323) 298-3515. The TAY Navigator is funded through the community service and support portion of the Mental Health Services Act.

Respite Care is scheduled to go into effect beginning July 1, 2012. There is a new approach to Respite Care with the development of an invoicing mechanism that allows the child Full Service Partnership (FSP) providers to invoice the Department of Mental Health. This invoice process is for the existing FSP providers whose cost of Respite Care services can be

facilitated in a variety of different ways including: 1) working with the regional center Respite Care vendors, 2) utilizing existing staff to deliver Respite Care, or 3) to pay for State licensed day care facilities and afterschool programs. In addition to implementation of the Respite Care Program, DMH is also piloting the program and using a family satisfaction survey to obtain feedback on the service provided.

A workgroup will also be formed to further explore options to evaluate the implementation of the pilot and additional methods that may be more helpful and efficient.

- Audrey L. Tousant, MSW, Child Welfare Administrator
- Wesley Carlin, Program Manager, Out-Patient Mental Health Program SHIELDS for Families

--Update on Mental Health Services for Families

Ms. Carlin reported the following:

SHIELDS for Families has been awarded a contract through DMH to work in collaboration with the Community Coalition on providing mental health services for relative caregivers and their children. Prevention and early intervention funding awarded through DMH was used to fund two therapists positioned at the Community Coalition Center with training in evidence-based models to provide support for caregivers. The evidence-based models used are Managing Adaptive Practices (MAP) and Alternatives for Families – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT).

Ms. Tousant reported the following:

SHIELDS for Families provides the following programs:

Adoption Promotion and Support Services (APSS)

APSS is a resource for adoptive families and families considering adoption. The program provides case management, mental health and supportive services. Through the program families have access to individual, group or family therapy, mentors, and support groups for children and/or adults, focused on adoption-related issues.

ASK (Ask, Seek, Knock) Program

ASK is funded by DCFS through the Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project. Through this Program, there are four family resource centers located in SPA 6 where families have access to a navigator that provides

linkages and referrals to community resources. In addition, the centers offer legal services, access to mental health services, vocational and educational services.

- Ricardo Hernandez, Strategic Consulting Analyst
Casey Family Programs

--National Trends and Data on Relative Care

Mr. Hernandez provided an overview of national trends related to kinship care on child safety, placement stability, permanency, family connections, well-being, mental health and juvenile delinquency, and kinship caregiver challenges. The findings concluded with the following:

Conclusion:

- Kinship placements tend to be more stable than foster care placements and there are less placement disruptions.
- Children in kinship care remain in care longer, take longer to reunify with birth parents, and are less likely to be adopted than those in foster care.
- Children placed with relatives are more likely to be placed with siblings and maintain relationships with birth parents and relatives.
- Children in kinship care are more likely to remain in their community of origin and maintain connections to cultural identity.
- Children in kinship care are more likely to remain in the same school and benefit from their school support system.
- There is little evidence of differences in mental health outcomes between children in kinship care and foster care.
- Kinship caregivers tend to be older, single, have lower incomes, educational attainment, and have more health issues. They also tend to receive fewer services and trainings than foster parents.
- Kinship placements tend to be more stable.

Additionally, Casey Family Programs (Casey) is doing an informal study of what causes children to be re-referred once in kinship care. The report will be ready at the end of June, 2012.

- Andrew Bridge, Executive Director
- Minsun Park Meeker, Policy Director
Child Welfare Initiative (CWI)

-- CWI Projects and Programs related to Relative Care

Mr. Bridge reported the following:

CWI is currently engaged in implementing new programs, and improving existing ones. One of the areas involves relative care and focuses on improving long term outcomes for kinship care families and their children. The following are projects CWI is currently working on:

- 1. Permanent Support Housing Program creates housing for kinship care families that are caring for children with ongoing mental health needs and have had involvement with DCFS.**
- 2. In partnership with DCFS and DMH, the Caroline Severance Manor was established and is scheduled to open in 2013. This housing program will focus on providing children in kinship care mental and physical health, educational, childcare, and other case planning services.**

Ms. Park Meeker reported the following:

CWI partnered with Michael Nash, Presiding Juvenile Judge, Edelman Children's Court, to establish the first family caregiver resource center located in the Edelman Children's Court, in 2010. This center provides assistance to kinship and caregiver families trying to navigate the system and understand what services and support are available to them.

- Joseph Devall, Organizing and Kinship Director
- Peggy Scott, Relative Caregiver
Community Coalition
- Cheral Hymen
ROCK- Raising Our Children's Kids

--Support services needed for Relative Care Providers

Ms. Scott shared her experiences as a relative caregiver and member of Community Coalition since 2001. She expressed the need for resource centers for relative caregivers and invited Mr. Browning, Director DCFS to visit Community Coalition.

Mr. Devall reported the following:

In 2000, Community Coalition organized to help relative caregivers project their voice and value to an overburdened foster care system and worked to bring back unused State funding for kinship care services and to expand services at the kinship resource centers. Community Coalition also partnered with Casey Family Programs to operate a demonstration kinship resource center in South Los Angeles and worked with state legislators on foster care and kinship funding sources.

In 2009, Community Coalition members focused efforts on gaining preventive and early mental health services. We are currently partnering with SHIELDS for Families to create a demonstration project providing families access to wellness support and various services.

Moving the kinship resource center to South Los Angeles will fill a need for over 2,500 families.

Ms. Hymen submitted the following list of kinship needs with recommendations to meet goals that facilitate these needs:

- 1. Initial and on-going Kinship Caregiver and Kinship Service Agency contact.**
- 2. A Kinship advocacy network.**
- 3. Mandatory kinship training for DCFS Children's Social Workers (CSW), Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSW) and administration.**
- 4. The privatization of kinship centers with co-location of DCFS staff or kinship service agencies co-located in DCFS centers.**
- 5. Kinship Caregiver education.**
- 6. Information on issues surrounding new law requiring warrants before detention.**

- Madelyn Gordon, Executive Director
Grandparents As Parents (GAP)

--Programs and Services Provided by GAP

Ms. Gordon distributed a handout and reported the following:

GAP's mission is to provide programs and services that meet the urgent and ongoing needs of grandparents and other relatives raising at-risk children.

GAP maintains numerous weekly support groups; there are currently 18 groups meeting weekly throughout Los Angeles County. GAP's three primary areas of focus are direct services, information, and referrals and linkages.

Ms. Gordon provided situational examples related to the following direct services GAP provides to families in need:

- 1. Mental Health**
- 2. Safety-Net**
- 3. Education and Child-Focused Advocacy**
- 4. Navigation**

- Philip Browning, Director DCFS

--Remarks

Director Browning expressed understanding of the needs of relative caregivers and shared his personal experience having been a relative caregiver and an adoptive parent. He articulated appreciation for relative caregivers and the vital resource they provide.

DCFS is looking at ways of improving communication with other departments that will benefit the child welfare system.

In response to questioning of the timeline for opening Kinship Centers, Director Browning stated that DCFS is aware of the need for these centers and is actively working through the complicated process of obtaining locations.

The Commissioners thanked the presenters, organizations and relative caregivers present and expressed encouragement with the collaboration and progress of the various agencies.

In response to questions posed by the Commission regarding the accessibility of kinship resources for Probation youth, Mr. Grey stated that Kinship Services and Kin-GAP are available to Probation youth and agreed to provide the Commission with the number of relative care providers with youth supervised by the Probation Department whose providers are getting services.

Chair Curry questioned whether the satellite locations for Kinship Centers were open. Mr. Grey advised that the locations are not yet open; however, the process is currently pending with the Chief Executive Office.

Commissioner Sorkin expressed concern with the limited availability of TAY navigators and requested information from Casey on the effects of children who have lost their relative caregiver.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT \(Casey Family Programs\)](#)
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENT \(R.O.C.K.\)](#)
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENT \(Grandparents As Parents\)](#)
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENT \(SHIELDS for Families\)](#)
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENT \(Kinship Support Services\)](#)

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

5. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (12-2503)

There were none.

Public Comment

6. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (12-2504)

Susan L. Stutz, GAP addressed the Commission.

Announcements

7. Announcements for the meeting of June 4, 2012. (12-2505)

Adjournment

8. Adjournment for the meeting of June 4, 2012. (12-2506)

Chair Curry adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.